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SPAWN

Vol. 1
RAGE, RAGE

SPIRIT

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DIGITAL EDITION.

VOLUME ONE

"RAGE, RAGE."

DANIEL?

DANIEL!

HM?

CAN I SEE YOU FOR A MINUTE?

WHAT'S UP?

I TRIED MESSAGING YOU, BUT YOUR MESSAGING IS DOWN?

YEAH, TURNED IT OFF. TIRED OF BEING LOOPED IN ON WHO'S GETTING A BIRTHDAY CAKE TODAY.

...THIS IS PART OF WHY I CALLED YOU IN. YOU'RE... NOT REALLY **GOOD** WITH OTHERS IN THE OFFICE.

I--LOOK, I KNOW I MAY NOT BE **GUNG-HO** ABOUT TEAM EXERCISES AND SHIT, BUT THE JUNE ISSUE IS AHEAD OF SCHEDULE! HOW OFTEN DOES **THAT** HAP--

I'M NOT HERE ABOUT YOUR **WORK.** I...

DID YOU SHOVE KEVIN?

LOOK, I KNOW I **SHOULDN'T** HAVE, BUT HE WAS BEING A **PRICK.** HE WAS TAKING CREDIT FOR JAMIE'S WORK ON THE NAVIGATION! IT WAS **BARELY** A **SHOVE!**

WE HAVEN'T HAD A PROBLEM **SINCE--**

--THAT'S NOT THE POINT. YOU **CAN'T ASSAULT CO-WORKERS.**

IT WAS **BARELY** A SH--

...OKAY. I'M **SORRY.** IF YOU HAVE TO...PUT A STRIKE ON MY RECORD OR WHATEVER, I WON'T FIGHT IT.

YOU'RE NOT **GETTING** IT. THIS ISN'T A "SLAP ON THE WRIST" THING. IT'S A **ZERO-TOLERANCE** POLICY. WHAT YOU DID WASN'T JUST WRONG, IT WAS **ILLEGAL.**

WE HAVE TO LET YOU GO. I'M SORRY.

...I... BUT I...

I'M REALLY SORRY. REALLY.

JUST...

YOU'VE **NEVER** BEEN HAPPY HERE. YOU'RE A **GOOD DESIGNER,** BUT YOU ALWAYS TALK ABOUT WANTING TO **WRITE** MORE, SO...

MAYBE THIS IS YOUR CHANCE?

YOU CAN FINALLY MAKE THE MOVE TOWARD BECOMING A WRITER?

OTHER PEOPLES PROBLEMS

BLRGHHH

YO!

GHHHRRFF

YO, DAN! I GOT SHOTS LINED! UP! AND THOSE GIRLS ARE IN! TO! US!

MAN... I THINK I OVERDID IT ALREADY...

POP A MINT AND COME ON!

WE'RE CELEBRATING! WHO GETS FIRED?! LAID OFF, SURE, MAN. WE'VE ALL BEEN LAID OFF. BUT FIRED? FOR SHOVING AN ASSHOLE?

THAT'S LEGENDARY!

FUCK...MAN, EASY FOR YOU TO SAY, YOU DON'T NEED THE MONEY...

TONY! FOR FUCK'S SAKE--

I CAN'T PROTECT THESE SHOTS ALL NIGHT! GET THE FUCK BACK IN HERE!

LOOK, YOU'LL FIGURE THIS SHIT OUT TOMORROW. YOU JUST GOTTA TAKE THINGS AS THEY COME, AND WHAT'S COMING NOW ARE SHOTS!

YEAH...

NUH-UH.

NOT HIM.

WHAT?

PUKING? YOU DON'T GET TO COME BACK IN FOR SHOTS.

THAT'S **CRAZY!** HE WAS A GENTLEMAN AND WENT **OUTSIDE** TO PUKE!

THE GENTLEMAN CAN FUCK OFF NOW.

GET... GET YOUR GODDAMN HAND OFF ME...

FUCK.

OFF.

BADING BADING BADING WAHOOOO

NNNHHH, WHAT FUCKIN' HIT ME...

WELL, THE **BOUNCER.** BUT THEN A COUPLE OF CUSTOMERS GOT IN ON IT, AS WELL, WORRIED THEY'D MISS THEIR BIG CHANCE TO BEAT A GUY.

FUUUUCK.

SHOK SHOK SHOK

DOING SHOK DOING

PIZZA HOUSE

FOUGHT THEM OFF AND DRAGGED YOU BACK TO YOUR PLACE LIKE A TRUE FRIEND.

WAIT... DID **YOU** TAKE MY **BED?**

WELL, I FIGURED YOU'D RATHER CLEAN PUKE OFF YOUR COUCH THAN THE BED.

THANKS, MAN...A TRUE FRIEND...

NOK NOK

...DID YOU ORDER US BREAKFAST?

IT'S TWO IN THE AFTERNOON, AND NO.

BUT THAT'S A GOOD IDEA. I'LL ORDER UP SOME ALL-DAYS.

AH, SHIT. THIS GUY LOOKS LIKE THE KIND OF GUY WHO WANTS MONEY CAUSE I DID SOMETHING WRONG...

DANIEL WEST?

...YES?

HERE YOU GO.

UH, AM I...BEING SUMMONED?

NOTHING OF THE SORT. SIMPLY A LETTER THAT REQUIRED A SPECIFIC TIMELINE FOR DELIVERY.

GOOD DAY, MR. WEST. FEEL BETTER SOON.

FOOD: GOTTEN.

WHO WAS IT?

JUST A... MAILMAN? OR SOMETHING?

WHAT'D YOU ORDER?

NOTHING. IT'S JUST A NOTE...

I...

WHAT'RE YOU UP TO NEXT WEEK?

CHAPTER ONE

"...AT THE LAW OFFICES OF JOEL PETERSON, IN THE TOWN OF **STILLWATER,** ON MAY 15, 2019."

BLAH BLAH BLAH.

"...TO RECEIVE AN UNDISCLOSED SUM FROM THE ESTATE OF MARGARET SMITH, YOUR GREAT-GRAND-AUNT."

IT MAKES **ZERO** SENSE.

IT'S **CRAZY!** LIKE, MAYBE YOU'LL HAVE TO SPEND A NIGHT IN A HAUNTED HOUSE TO GET IT?! AND YOU HAD **NO** IDEA?

I TOLD YOU! NONE! AND SINCE MOM AND DAD AREN'T AROUND ANYMORE, I'VE GOT NO ONE TO ASK. BUT, MAN... "GREAT-GRAND-AUNT" SOUNDS **WILDLY** FAKE.

HEY, YOU KNOW **WHAT--**

MAYBE IT **IS.** BUT IT'S STILL AN **ADVENTURE,** YEAH? YOU **NEED** THIS, TRUST ME.

THE JOB THING SUCKS, SURE. BUT THAT'LL SORT ITSELF OUT. ALWAYS DOES.

I'M MORE WORRIED THAT YOU SPEND ALL YOUR TIME IN YOUR **APARTMENT** SINCE TIFFANY DECIDED TO--

CAN WE NOT? I'M FINE.

PEOPLE BREAK UP. IT HAPPENS ALL THE TIME--

TO **YOU,** YEAH--

AND MY **APARTMENT** IS **NICE.**

SURE, I GET IT. BUT...

WHEN YOU **DO** GO OUT, YOU EITHER END UP IN A **FIGHT** OR **DEAD DRUNK** OR **BOTH.** I'M NOT THE **FIRST** TO POINT THAT--

YOU'RE THE ONE BUYING ME DRINKS! YOU...

LOOK, **THANK YOU** FOR YOUR CONCERN.

HONESTLY?

OPEN 24 HOURS

I THINK I JUST NEEDED TO GET OUT OF THE CITY.

WANT ANYTHING?

RED BULL. SPLIT A BIG BAG OF CHIPS?

DONE AND DONE. NO CALORIE COUNTING ON A **ROAD TRIP.**

HEY, IS THERE ANYWHERE TO GET A BITE TO EAT ON THE WAY TO **STILLWATER?**

WHERE?

STILLWATER... HOUR WEST OF HERE? YOU DON'T KNOW IT?

NOPE.

LIKE, **AN HOUR** WEST. THIS IS A **GAS STATION.** FOR **CARS GOING PLACES.** YOU REALLY HAVEN'T HEARD OF IT?

LOOK, **CARS** MAY GO PLACES, BUT I DON'T.

EIGHTEEN SIXTY-THREE. CASH OR CARD?

ALL GOOD?

...SURE.

COULDN'T TELL IF SHE WAS NEGGING **ME** OR NEGGING THE AREA OR NEGGING **LIFE**, MAN...CUTE, THOUGH...

HOW MUCH FARTHER?

UHHHHH...

MY **PHONE** SAYS WE GET OFF IN...**TWO** EXITS, BUT **ZERO** ROAD SIGNS HAVE SHOWN IT.

IT'S NOT **NOT** WEIRD, Y'KNOW?

WHAT SHOULD WE... SHOULD WE HIT THE NEXT STATION OR RESTAURANT AND ASK?

TRUST THE PHONE, MAN.

ALRIGHT...

TRUST THE PHONE...

WEIRD ROAD, NO SIGNS--

MYSTERIOUS LETTER OF INHERITANCE...YEAH, THIS IS DEEPLY INTO HORROR MOVIE TERRITORY NOW.

LET'S... NOTHING BAD EVER HAPPENS IN HORROR MOVIES IN THE **DAYTIME.** LET'S JUST MAKE SURE WE'RE BACK OUT BEFORE SUNDOWN, 'KAY?

YEAH. I LIKE ADVENTURE AND ALL, BUT--

SHIT--

SHIT SHIT SHIT--

SHIT.

LICENSE AND REGISTRATION.

SURE, MAN. JUST A SEC...

WERE WE SPEEDING, OFFICER?

I'LL ASK THE QUESTIONS.

WHERE YOU BOYS HEADED?

UH, STILLWATER.

WHAT BRINGS YOU THERE?

LEGAL?

UM, JUST--JUST A **LEGAL** MATTER.

DECEASED RELATIVE. SOME ESTATE BUSINESS.

REALLY?

...YEAH. WHAT'S SO--IS THERE A **PROBLEM,** OFFICER?

STILLWATER DOESN'T GET A LOT OF VISITORS. QUIET TOWN. A **GOOD** TOWN. SO YOU BOYS BEST BEHAVE OR--

HA! LISTEN TO ME! IF I'M BEING **HONEST,** THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE PULLED SOMEBODY OVER IN, LIKE, A YEAR!

I...

DIDN'T MEAN TO COME OFF **SO INTIMIDATING!** DON'T GET A LOT OF CHANCES TO BE "BAD COP", Y'KNOW?

TELL YA WHAT, I'LL LET YOU OFF WITHOUT A TICKET.

ENJOY YOUR TIME IN TOWN, BOYS. BUT JUST A HEADS-UP?

IT'S AN OLD-FASHIONED PLACE. CURFEW KICKS IN AT 8PM. GOT IT?

...GOT IT.

GOOD! SAFE TRAVELS!

SO, UH--

WE'RE **CLEARLY** NOT GOING TO BE **PARTYING** IN THIS TOWN.

YEAH.

MAN...I HOPE THERE'S A NICE BIG CHECK WAITING FOR YOU ON THE OTHER END OF THIS...

I KNOW YOU'LL BE FINE, BUT I **ALSO** KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE STARING AT THE WRONG KIND OF ZEROS ON YOUR BANK STATEMENT.

WHEN WE GET BACK, I'LL POKE AROUND, SEE IF I CAN FIND ANY OPENINGS FOR YOU AT **SPELGRAM...**

LOOK, THAT'S... YOU'VE DONE **PLENTY** FOR ME, MAN. I DON'T THINK THE OTHER PEOPLE AT YOUR COMPANY WOULD LOOK TOO **KINDLY** ON YOUR CHRONICALLY UNEMPLOYED BUDDY LANDING A GIG THERE.

LET'S JUST GO SEE WHAT THE DEAL IS AND IF I'M **RICH** OR NOT, 'CAUSE GUESS WHAT?

WE'RE HERE.

NOT THE BEST VIBE.

FUCK!

NOTHING IS LABELLED HERE! HAVEN'T SEEN A SINGLE STREET SIGN.

LET'S ASK IN THIS DINER, GET A QUICK BITE.

DNG DNG

FUCK, NO SIGNAL...

HEY THERE. WE'RE LOOKING FOR A LAW OFFICE. DO YOU KNOW THE AREA?

I... UH...

SORRY. DON'T GET A LOT OF... VISITORS.

LAW OFFICE?

YEAH, **JOEL PETERSON?** THAT'S THE LAWYER. SUPPOSED TO BE ON GRANT STREET, BUT CAN'T SEEM TO SEE ANY STREET SIGNS....

PETERSON...? HE HASN'T, UH, HE HASN'T LIVED HERE FOR...I WANT TO SAY FIFTEEN YEARS?

I--REALLY? IS THERE-- DID SOMEBODY TAKE **OVER** HIS PRACTICE?

NOPE. LOOK, DO YOU WANT SOME FOOD? CAUSE IF YOU JUST CAME HERE TO SEE SOME LAWYER, THEN YOU'RE OUT OF LUCK.

I...OKAY. WE'LL TAKE A COUPLE OF MENUS, IF IT'S NOT TOO MUCH TROUBLE.

TONY? FOOD?

TONY?

HEY, MAN, FORGET ABOUT YOUR PHONE FOR A SECOND. LET'S **EAT.**

DUDE... THOSE **KIDS...**

WHAT? WHAT'RE--

H-HEY! **HEY!**

THAT'S NOT **SAFE!** GET--

GET DOWN FROM THERE!

WHAT'RE YOU--OH, SHIT--

HOLY SHIT, HE'S ALIVE--

HELP! SOMEONE GET HELP!!!

SOMEONE! COME ON! HE'S DYING!

WHAT THE FUCK, MAN, WHAT THE FUCK!

WHOA WHOA, YOU CAN'T MOVE HIM--

NOBODY'S EVEN--

NOBODY EVEN CARES--

YOU! WHERE THE FUCK IS A DOCTOR?!

I--

JANET [illegible], M.D.
Internal Medicine

HELP! WE NEED HELP!!

PLEASE STOP SHOUTING. WHAT'S THE BIG EMERG--

WHO-- WHO ARE YOU?

WHO FUCKING CARES?! HELP THIS KID!

I--OF COURSE. PLEASE, WE NEED TO GIVE THE YOUNG MAN SOME ROOM--

SO I CAN--CAN EXAMINE HIM CAREFULLY...

GET IN YOUR CAR AND **GO**. PLEASE, YOU **HAVE** TO TRUST ME. THIS WILL NOT END WELL, OTHERWISE.

I CAN'T PROTECT YOU. NO ONE CAN.

D-DANIEL?

...DANIEL?

DANIEL?

WHERE IS HE?!

EX- EXCUSE ME?

THE **KID.** THE KID WHOSE **BLOOD** YOU'RE **WASHING AWAY!** WHO **RAN AWAY** LIKE IT NEVER HAPPENED!

WHERE IS--

ALRIGHT.

ENOUGH'S ENOUGH.

I **KNEW** YOU'D BE TROUBLE. SHOULD'VE TRUSTED MY **GUT.**

WHAT THE **FUCK** IS GOING **ON?**

DUDE, YOUR-- YOUR **EYE...**

IT'S...

ALWAYS TRUST MY **GUT.**

WHAT'S...

DON'T. FUCKIN'.

TOUCH ME!

-NF-

-=HNH.=-

AHHH!!

STOP! STOP IT!!!

WHAT ARE YOU-- SOMEONE! HELP!

ALMOST NEVER HAPPENS...

BUT ***ONCE*** IN A WHILE, WE GET A FUCKIN' DUMB PIECE OF SHIT LIKE ***YOU,*** AND YOU JUST GO RIGHT AHEAD AND SIGN YOUR DEATH WARRANT.

C-C'MON M-MAN... JUST L-LET US...

GRAHH!!!

WHAT THE ***FUCK?!***

S-STOP-- WON'T-- WON'T--

WON'T WHAT?

TUNK

TALK? TELL PEOPLE ABOUT THE KID? ABOUT ME?

ABOUT MY TOWN?

WELL, LET ME JUST SAY--

I BELIEVE YOU.

ALRIGHT--

LET'S CLEAN UP.

MIND IF I BORROW YOUR **TRUCK**, SAUL?

KEYS'RE IN THE IGNITION.

...THIS CAN'T... THIS CAN'T...

ROPE 'EM UP, JOHN. LET'S TAKE THEM TO **THE EDGE.**

ARE YOU--YOU **SURE,** TED? SHOULDN'T WE--

SHOULDN'T WE BRING THEM TO **THE JUDGE** FIRST? OR **SHERIFF LISTER?**

DOC--

YOU **REALLY** WANT TO BOTHER **THE JUDGE** WITH THIS?

AND THE **SHERIFF?** SHE **TRUSTS ME.**

THIS IS CUT AND DRY.

THEY SAW A **FIXIN'** ON THAT LITTLE SHIT **GALEN, AND** THEMSELVES. IF THEY **SEE,** THEY GO TO THE **EDGE,** PLAIN AND SIMPLE. AND, ANOTHER THING--

FUCK YOU, DOC. I'M GETTIN' **REAL** TIRED OF YOU QUESTIONIN' ME.

LET'S RIDE.

BECK

D-DAN...?

DANIEL?

WHAT-- WHAT'RE WE GONNA DO?

THEY'RE GONNA-- THEY'RE GONNA KILL US, RIGHT?

THERE'S NO WAY THEY'LL LET US-- AFTER--

FUCK--

DANIEL?

OH GOD, WE'RE STOPPING. THEY'RE--

SLAM

FIRE STARTED?

YEAH, JIMMY P. ZIPPED UP HERE ON THAT DIRT-BIKE O' HIS, GOT IT GOIN'.

GOOD.

PLEASE! WE'VE GOT-- WE'VE GOT **MONEY**--I CAN--

-NF!-

"MONEY". HEH.

...I'LL... I'LL FUCKIN'...

KILL YOU!!

JEEZ, WHATEVER YOU SAY.

BUT HERE'S THE **THING**, CITY SHIT--

YA CAN'T KILL ME. YA CAN'T KILL **ANY** OF US. I MEAN, YOU **CAN** OUT HERE--

BUT PAST THAT **FENCE?** IN THE BORDERS OF **STILLWATER?** MY **HOME?**

NOBODY DIES.

AND I AIM TO KEEP IT THAT WAY.

BUT OUT HERE?

WH- **NO! NO! PLEASE--**

BANG

ALL BETS ARE OFF.

AND EVERY MINUTE I'M OUT HERE IS ANOTHER MINUTE OFF MY LIFE--

SO YOU'LL FORGIVE ME IF I CUT TO THE CHASE.

WAIT!!

WAIT.

MY BOY...

YOU'RE BACK...

YOU'RE BACK...

1990

GOD, I CAN'T BELIEVE WE'RE GOING TO BE LATE.

GALEN!

GALEN!!

WHAT?

WHAT--WHY AREN'T YOU WITH ***TOMMY?!*** WHERE ***IS*** HE? WE HAVE TO GO! AND ***YOU'VE*** GOT TO GO ***HOME***! YOUR GRANDPA'S PROBABLY WORRIED SICK!

HE'S NOT. AND TOMMY'S FINE. JUST PLAYING IN THE BACKYARD.

WAIT, WHAT--

OH MY GOD.

TOMMY!!

WHAT ARE YOU **DOING?!** YOU **KNOW** YOU CAN'T BE OUT HERE ALONE!

IT'S **DANGEROUS!** WHAT IF THAT **WOLF GRABBED** YOU?!

WE HAVE TO GET **READY.** IT'S **SHERIFF DAVE'S** BIRTHDAY.

COME **ON,** TOMMY...

NO, MOTHER.

I THINK I'M PERFECTLY HAPPY RIGHT HERE.

AREN'T **YOU?**

NOW

I'M SURE YOU'VE GOT **QUESTIONS.** WHERE ARE YOU? WHAT **IS** THIS TOWN? WHY DIDN'T THAT **BOY DIE?**

BUT RIGHT NOW THE ONLY QUESTION YOU **SHOULD** HAVE...

IS "WHO **IS** THIS GUY?" BECAUSE THE ANSWER TO **THAT** ONE IS **IMPORTANT.**

I'M YOUR **FATE.**

CHAPTER TWO

CRNCH

CRNCH CRNCH

CNCH

...ANYTHING?

NAH--

NOTHING.

WHAT DO YOU THINK HE'LL DECIDE?

WHAT HE *ALWAYS* DOES.

AND WHAT'S *THAT*, GALEN?

SH- SHERIFF-- WE WERE JUST--

JUST WHAT, JOHNNY?

MORE ROOFTOP HORSE-PLAY? MORE DAREDEVIL STUNTS--

WE'RE SPYING ON JUDGE TAYLOR.

I'M NOT! I'M JUST HEADING HO--

HUH. IT'S REFRESHING, GETTING HONESTY OUT OF YOU FOR A CHANGE. BUT I'M STILL GOING TO BREAK YOUR BINOCULARS.

YOU KNOW YOU CAN'T SPY ON THE JUDGE. IF HE FOUND OUT--

HE'D PUNISH ME.

SO, LET'S NOT TELL HIM, OKAY?

KRAK!

YOU SAW THEM COME INTO TOWN. FROM UP HERE.

YOU SAW.

AND THEN YOU FELL?

...YOU'RE OLD ENOUGH TO NOT HAVE MISCHIEF IN YOUR EYES, BUT THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE THERE THAT I SURE DON'T LIKE.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE UP TO, GALEN...

BUT I'M GONNA FIND OUT.

WHAT THE FUCK ARE YOU UP TO, GIRL?

LEAVE HER ALONE, TED.

SHUT UP, QUINTIN.

WELL? WHAT'S THE PLAN HERE?

YOU EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE THAT CITY SHIT IS YOUR SON?

NAH. THIS IS YOU TRYING TO STOP ME FROM DOING WHAT'S RIGHT.

THAT'S IT, ISN'T IT? YOU'VE NEVER GIVEN A SHIT ABOUT PROTECTING THE TOWN...

TALK, YOU FUCKER!!

TED!!

SHUT UP, QUINTIN!

THIS PIECE OF **TRASH** THINKS SHE CAN GET IN THE WAY OF **ME** DOING MY **JOB**, SHE'S GOT **ANOTHER** THING--

BLAM

SHUT **UP**, TED.

SHUT **UP**, QUINTIN.

GKK... SPLL....

TANYA, GOD-**DAMMIT!**

...FSHH.... SHOOO...

YOU KILLED AN OUTSIDER.

WITHOUT CONSULTING THE **JUDGE.**

WITHOUT CONSULTING *ME.*

YOU'RE LUCKY I JUST *SHOT* YOU, ASSHOLE.

PUT HIM IN THE CELL TO SLEEP IT OFF.

AND I GUESS *I'VE* GOT TO CLEAN THIS UP...

HE CAN DO IT WHEN HE'S ALL BETTER.

NOW...

YOU.

TED'S AN ASSHOLE, BUT YOU'VE *STILL* GOT TO ANSWER SOME QUESTIONS, LAURA.

IS... *IS* THIS GUY YOUR *SON?*

THE *MATH* WORKS OUT, BUT--

IF THIS IS SOMETHING YOU **PLANNED**, YOU JUST--

I MEAN, YOU JUST WALKED HIM INTO A **DEATH SENTENCE.**

THE JUDGE **WILL** KILL HIM. IT'S WHAT HE **DOES.**

NO HE FUCKING WON'T

WHAT?

NO, HE FUCKING WON'T.

I... LAURA, HE--

IF HE DOES...

I'LL KILL THE JUDGE.

IT'S MY JOB HERE. EVERYONE HAS A **JOB** IN **STILLWATER,** AND THIS ONE, WITH THE GREATEST **BURDEN,** IS MINE.

I'M **GOOD** AT IT. WE DON'T NEED THE **COURTROOM** ANYMORE--

OR **LAWYERS,** OR DAYS AND DAYS OF DELIBERATING.

I'VE BEEN DOING THIS A **LONG TIME,** DANIEL. I CAN SEE INTO A MAN'S **HEART.** MY VERDICTS ARE ABOUT THE **PERSON,** NOT THE **CRIME.**

'CAUSE OUR ONLY **CRIME** HERE HAS BEEN A **FISTFIGHT** WITH OUR DEAR, STUPID **DEPUTY.**

WHICH IN **ITSELF** IS NOT A MATTER OF "LIFE AND DEATH," AND YET YOU SIT HERE AWAITING MY VERDICT ON WHETHER OR NOT WE **KILL** YOU.

...DO YOU KNOW **WHY** THAT IS...?

YOU'RE A BUNCH OF ***BLADES.***

I... DON'T KNOW WHAT--

BLADE. WESLEY SNIPES? 1998?

IT'S ALL I COULD THINK OF...

LAST NIGHT, I LAID IN THE CELL, JUST CRYING. TONY...DEAD. A NIGHTMARE.

BUT THEN I WOKE UP TODAY, AND I WAS STILL IN THE CELL....

TONY WAS STILL DEAD, AND I WAS PROBABLY NEXT. AND ALL I COULD THINK OF WAS...***BLADE.*** THIS TOWN FULL OF VAMPIRES WHO COULD WALK AROUND DURING THE DAY. I LOVED THAT MOVIE AS A KID...

IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE. BUT ***NOTHING*** MAKES SENSE NOW. SO THAT'S--THAT'S WHAT I ENDED ON...

YOU'RE A BUNCH OF FUCKING ***BLADES.*** AND YOU'RE GOING TO KILL ME.

THIS IS A **SPECIAL** TOWN.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT A **"BLADE"** IS, BUT...I CAN SAY WITH **CERTAINTY** THAT WE'RE NOT *"VAMPIRES"*. THIS IS A GOOD TOWN OF GOOD PEOPLE.

AS LONG AS YOU'RE WITHIN OUR BORDERS, THE BORDERS PLANTED BY **GOD**...

YOU CANNOT DIE. YOU CANNOT **AGE.** YOU **HEAL.**

THIS IS OUR TOWN'S BLESSING. BUT **WITH** THAT BLESSING COMES **VIGILANCE.**

GOD INTENDED FOR OUR **CITIZENS** TO RECEIVE THIS GIFT, THIS **EDEN.** IF OTHERS FOUND OUT...

WELL, IT WOULDN'T BE **EDEN** FOR LONG, WOULD IT?

SO, OUR **RULES** HERE ARE STRICT, YES, BUT **NECESSARY.**

EVERY CITIZEN OF **STILLWATER** RECEIVES THE **GIFT** OF **ETERNAL LIFE.**

EVERY **OUTSIDER** WHO DISCOVERS OUR SECRET...

MEETS GOD.

BUT IF IT'S **TRUE,** IF YOU'RE A **SON OF STILLWATER...**

YOU'RE A **CITIZEN. AND** AN **OUTSIDER.**

TRICKY, TRICKY.

BUT THAT'S WHY I'M THE **JUDGE,** SEE? TO **UNRAVEL** THESE KNOTS.

DO YOU **LIVE** AS A CITIZEN OR **DIE** AS AN OUTSIDER? NO MATTER WHAT I DECIDE...

SOMEONE WILL HAVE TO BE **PUNISHED.**

...YRR FCKNZ DEAD...

...YU...YU HEAR ME YU LIL SHIT...

...FCKN... DEAD.

GOD, TED...

YOU CAN'T TAKE A **HINT** EVEN WHEN THE HINT'S A **BULLET** IN THE FACE...

ALL RIGHT, BUDDY. IT'S TIME.

TIME-- TIME FOR **WHAT?**

TIME FOR SOME **FRESH AIR.**

LOOK... THAT... **JUDGE?**

HE'S CLEARLY **CRAZY.** I DON'T KNOW IF THAT'S EVEN...EVEN **EVIDENT** IN A TOWN LIKE THIS, BUT--

THE **JUDGE** IS THE **JUDGE.** HE'S AN **ACQUIRED** TASTE, BUT HE'S ALWAYS DONE RIGHT BY ME AND HE'S **ALWAYS DONE RIGHT BY THE TOWN.**

YOU GOT CAUGHT UP IN A THING YOU WEREN'T SUPPOSED TO, SO, FOR **THAT,** I'M SORRY...

NH... WHERE ARE WE--

BUT HIS **DECISION** IS IN. SO--

WATER POLICE

TIME FOR A **TOWN MEETING.**

"THE SAFETY OF THE PEOPLE SHALL BE THE HIGHEST LAW."

THIS IS OUR GUIDING PRINCIPAL. IT WILL ALWAYS **BE** OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLE.

OUR RULES ARE DIFFERENT THAN THEY **USED** TO BE BECAUSE OUR TOWN, OUR GIFT, **DEMANDS** IT.

THIS MAN BEFORE US, **DANIEL WEST** IS AN **OUTSIDER.**

AS SUCH, HE IS A **RISK.** AND WE DO NOT TOLERATE **RISK.**

SO HIS SENTENCE SHOULD BE **DEATH** AT THE **EDGE.**

BUT THERE'S A WRINKLE.

THIS **MAN** IS THE **SON** OF **LAURA QUINN,** ONE OF OUR OWN.

WAIT, WHAT ARE--

WHICH MEANS THAT **LAURA SENT** HIM AWAY.

LAURA QUINN, WHO WE **LOVE, BETRAYED** OUR TOWN.

"HER CRIME **WAS** FAR IN THE **PAST,** SO THERE IS SOME **LENIENCY** I'M WILLING TO PROVIDE.

"**THE EDGE** ISN'T READY FOR HER..."

BUT THE PARK IS.

NO!! WHY--

"TWO WEEKS IS MY SENTENCE.

"TO BE CARRIED OUT IMMEDIATELY."

THIS IS INSANE! YOU CAN'T DO THIS! I NEED TO--TO--

AND AS FOR YOU DANIEL WEST, OR "TOMMY QUINN"...

"THIS IS YOUR HERITAGE. YOU HAD NO CHOICE TO LEAVE, BUT NOW YOU'RE HOME."

YOU'RE A CITIZEN OF STILLWATER, WITH ALL THE RIGHTS AND LIFE THAT ENTAILS. WE'VE ONLY GRANTED THIS TWICE IN OUR LONG HISTORY, AND NOW IT'S THREE.

YOU'RE HOME. YOU'VE INHERITED EDEN, DANIEL...

"WELCOME TO STILLWATER."

I've run twice since I got here.

First time, I didn't even escape **Main Street** before they got the jump.

Deputy **Ted** has his very own **militia** watching me 24/7 while I...acclimatize.

I haven't acclimatized.

KRAK

NHHHH SHIT....

PRETTY FUCKIN' STUPID, DANNY...

FIFTY MORE FEET? PAST THE BORDER?

THAT BULLET WOULD'VE ENDED YOUR LIFE.

NFF! FUCK... FUCK YOU...

THE JUDGE WAS REAL SPECIFIC WITH HIS ORDERS. YOU'RE A CITIZEN. WE CAN'T KILL YOU.

BUT IF YOU TRY TO RUN AGAIN...THAT THIRD STRIKE...?

NGH!

DEAL'S **OFF.** I WAIT **OUT** THAT FIFTY FEET. I SHOOT YOU **DEAD.**

AND I'VE BEEN PRACTICING MY AIM FOR THIRTY YEARS, SO YOU'D BETTER BELIEVE I WON'T MISS.

NOW LET'S GET YOU HOME...

AND TUCK YOU IN.

CHAPTER THREE

So, last night was **strike two.** If they find this **diary,** that's **strike three,** as nobody is supposed to document anything to do with the town and its...situation.

But I'm writing it anyway, 'cause I feel like I'm losing my mind, and this is the only thing keeping me sane, reminding me this is really happening.

There's a woman buried six feet under who says she's my **mother.**

And apparently she'll be perfectly Fine. Like me.

I've been shot **twice** now, and the only **evidence** is my laundry.

This is really happening.

So, if you'd been shot, and the **wound** healed in an hour, what would you do?

I guess you'd still go to the doctor.

JINGLE JING

BE RIGHT WITH YOU, I--

OH.

I'VE BEEN SHOT. I NEED A DOCTOR.

THAT'S NOT TRUE.

IT IS, DOC. RIGHT IN THE BACK, LAST NIGHT. CLEAN THROUGH.

THAT'S **NOT** WHAT I MEAN, AND YOU KNOW IT.

NOBODY-- NOBODY NEEDS A **DOCTOR** HERE.

I MEAN, **MOSTLY.** SOMETIMES A **BONE** NEEDS RESETTING PROPERLY...

STILL, HAVE TO MAINTAIN THE OFFICE FOR APPEARANCES...

I WANT TO KNOW **EVERY-THING.**

I...

SO FAR, **YOU** SEEM TO BE THE MOST **NORMAL** PERSON HERE. NOBODY TRUSTS ME, NOBODY TALKS TO ME. I JUST WANT TO KNOW...

IF I'M **TRAPPED** HERE, IF I'M SUPPOSED TO **LIVE** HERE...

I NEED TO KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON. TO **ME.**

LET'S GO FOR A WALK.

I'M NOT SURE HOW MUCH TO TELL YOU.

EVERYTHING? WE CAN START WITH EVERYTHING?

WELL...

IF ***THE JUDGE*** OR ***THE SHERIFF*** HAVEN'T TOLD YOU ANYTHING, I'M PRETTY SURE IT'S NOT MY PLACE TO DO SO...

LOOK, IT'S ***CLEAR*** THEY'RE IN ***CHARGE,*** AND EVERYONE IS ***SCARED*** OF THEM...I JUST WANT TO KNOW ***WHY?*** WHAT KIND OF ***HOLD*** DO THEY HAVE OVER ***STILLWATER?***

WHY DO THEY LET THAT PSYCHO ***TED*** RUN RAMPANT? WHY IS THIS TOWN A ***SECRET? SUCH*** A SECRET THAT THEY KILLED MY FR--

STOP.

I ***CAN'T*** ANSWER THOSE QUESTIONS. THERE ARE ***CONSEQUENCES*** HERE FOR TALKING. THAT MUCH YOU ALREADY KNOW.

BUT I'M... I'M A ***DOCTOR...*** SO YOUR ***HEALTH*** FALLS UNDER MY JURISDICTION...

HERE'S WHAT I CAN TELL YOU.

YOU CAN'T DIE WHEN YOU'RE INSIDE THE TOWN. YOU HEAL AMAZINGLY QUICK. I'VE SEEN PEOPLE REGENERATE ENTIRE BODIES FROM JUST A HEAD.

I'VE STUDIED IT FOR DECADES AND I STILL CAN'T MAKE SENSE OF IT. NO ONE CAN. THE SCIENCE OF IT, HOW YOU COULD EVEN FIND THE ENERGY TO CREATE MASS THAT QUICKLY...

AND IT'S NOT JUST **PEOPLE.** ANYTHING INSIDE OUR TOWN, ANYTHING WITH **LIFE...**

SNAP

REVERTS BACK TO HOW IT WAS WHEN TIME **FROZE** FOR THE TOWN, OR WHEN IT **ENTERED** THE TOWN.

OF COURSE, THERE ARE COMPLICATIONS. FIRES DON'T GO OUT NATURALLY IF THE FUEL IS STILL ROOTED. WE LEARNED THAT THE HARD WAY.

WE DON'T NEED TO **EAT,** BUT WE STILL **ENJOY** IT...

IT CREATES SOME COMPLICATIONS...

LIKE ***MEAT.*** WE CAN GET IT FROM OUTSIDE TOWN, BUT WE DON'T LIKE TO DO THAT. TOO DANGEROUS. SO SOME PEOPLE, WELL...

THEY TAKE THE MEAT RIGHT OFF OF THE LIVING CATTLE.

TORTURE. BUT IT GROWS BACK, GOOD AS NEW, SO THEY THINK IT'S ALL RIGHT.

CAN YOU IMAGINE? LIVING FOREVER, BEING...BEING... ***BUTCHERED?*** OVER AND OVER AGAIN? IT'S...IT'S...

THE...THE ***SITUATION*** REVEALS NEW PROBLEMS ALL THE TIME, EVEN NOW. YOUR EXISTENCE BEING ONE OF THEM. IT USED TO BE THAT EVERYTHING CAME DOWN TO A VOTE, BUT NOW IT FALLS ON ***THE JUDGE.***

WE PETITION HIM, MAKE OUR CASES, AND THE FATE OF THE ***TOWN*** RESTS WITH HIM AND...

HEH. WASN'T SUPPOSED TO TALK ABOUT ***THOSE*** KINDS OF THINGS...

LOOK, THERE'S A ***PARTY*** TONIGHT. THE HOUSE BEHIND THE ***LIBRARY.*** MEET THE TOWNS-PEOPLE.

THEY DON'T TRUST YOU, AND THEY WON'T UNTIL YOU START TALKING WITH THEM LIKE IT'S NORMAL.

I KNOW YOU'RE IMPATIENT TO FIGURE EVERYTHING OUT.

SOME OF IT YOU'LL ***NEVER*** FIGURE OUT, AND YOU'LL EVENTUALLY REALIZE THAT'S FINE...

"'CAUSE YOU'VE GOT ALL THE TIME IN THE WORLD."

UNITY. IT'S TED. GOT EYES?

YEAH. DOC WALSH JUST BROKE OFF. NEW BLOOD'S PROBABLY HEADING BACK YOUR WAY.

MIGHT WANT TO HAVE A LITTLE TALK WITH THE DOC JUST TO MAKE SURE HE AIN'T RUNNING OFF AT THE MOUTH **TOO** MUCH.

NAH...

DOC KNOWS WHAT'S GOOD FOR HIM.

STAY ON THE KID UNTIL HE GETS DOWNTOWN. AFTER THAT...

I GOT **MY** EYE ON HIM...

WHY DO YOU DO THAT?

JESUS, GALEN.

WHAT THE **FUCK?** DO YOU **LIVE** ON ROOFTOPS NOW?

I JUST LIKE WATCHING PEOPLE. BEING ABOVE THEM, INSTEAD OF BELOW THEM.

WHY DO YOU DRINK THAT?

WHAT, **COFFEE?**

YES.

IT DOESN'T WAKE YOU UP LIKE IT USED TO. YOU DON'T HAVE ADDICTIONS ANYMORE.

KID...

YOU WERE NEVER OLD ENOUGH TO HAVE THINGS THAT WERE JUST **HABITS** BEFORE, THINGS THAT MAKE YOU HAPPY.

SOMETIMES... YOU JUST WANT TO FEEL LIKE NOTHING'S CHANGED, ESPECIALLY WHEN NOTHING CHANGES.

LIKE I SAID, YOU PROBABLY DON'T GET IT. THERE'S COMFORT IN BEING WHO YOU ALWAYS WERE.

SO, DOES THAT MEAN YOU WERE A CONTROLLING DICK WHO THOUGHT HE COULD RUN THE TOWN **BEFORE** THE DAY?

SHOTS!!!

UH... HELLO?

CHUG! CHUG! CHUG!

HEY! YOU CAME!

YEAH... FIGURED IT WAS BETTER THAN RUNNING AGAIN...

TIRED OF CATCHIN' **BULLETS,** JUNIOR?

OH, FOR FUCK'S SAKE--

THINK YOU AND YOUR BAND OF MERRY FUCKS COULD JUST **TAKE A NIGHT OFF?**

CAUSE IF NOT, I'LL **GLADLY--**

DANIEL! DON'T PAY THEM ANY MIND...

LET'S JUST HAVE A DRINK...

AND YOU CAN MEET THE PEOPLE OF THE TOWN WHO **WON'T** SHOOT YOU...

SO, UH, HE'S HERE.

ASTUTE AS EVER, MR. MAYOR.

NO NEED TO GET--GET SNIPPY, SHERIFF...

I'M WORRIED.

I THINK WE SHOULD-- SHOULD DELAY THE TOWN MEETING... LET THINGS SETTLE BEFORE...

CAN YOU JUST--FOR ONCE--SHOW SOME FUCKING CONFIDENCE? YOU'RE THE VESTIGIAL TAIL OF DEMOCRACY IN THIS TOWN AND A GODDAMN BEACON AS TO WHY THAT IS.

LAURA COMES UP TOMORROW. THE KID EXISTING WON'T SWAY ANYONE. NOTHING CHANGES IN THIS TOWN, INCLUDING MINDS.

THE MEETING IS HAPPENING. THE WORLDLIES WILL HAVE THEIR LITTLE SAY, AND THEN THE JUDGE WILL LAUGH THEM OUT OF THE TOWN HALL.

AND IF THE LAUGHTER DOESN'T, I WILL.

SO CALM DOWN, TRY TO RADIATE MAYORNESS...

AND ENJOY THE PARTY.

WOW... YOU GUYS PARTY **HARD** IN THIS TOWN...

HEH, NOT REALLY...

OUR BODIES REJECT **POISON,** SO THE BEST YOU CAN DO IS TO DRINK QUICKLY AND FEEL A BUZZ FOR FIVE SECONDS BEFORE IT ALL RESETS AGAIN.

WEIRDLY ENOUGH, THAT WAS THE PART A LOT OF TOWNSPEOPLE HAD THE MOST DIFFICULTY WITH. LOT OF PEOPLE DRANK TO NUMB THE PAIN OF LIVING, SO TO SUDDENLY NOT HAVE THAT ABILITY, **PLUS** YOUR LIVING'S BEEN EXTENDED **INDEFINITELY?**

IT WAS TOUGH TO TAKE FOR A WHILE...

DOCTOR WALSH!

AH! MRS. LILLOW! I WAS JUST LOOKING FOR Y--

HMPH. TEN MINUTES TOO **LATE,** AS **USUAL.**

YOU MUST BE THE BOY.

I--YES, I'M... "THE BOY". PLEASED TO MEET YOU, MISS....

MRS. LILLOW! I **RUN** THINGS HERE, SO I EXPECT **EXCELLENT** BEHAVIOUR FROM YOU, **SON.**

...RUN? I THOUGHT THE **JUDGE** WAS THE--

AH, MRS. **LILLOW** HERE IS **AFFECTIONATELY** KNOWN AS **THE ADMINISTRATOR.** SHE'S IN CHARGE OF MAKING SURE EVERY-THING RUNS SMOOTHLY. ESPECIALLY IN REGARDS TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD FINDING OUT ABOUT THE TOWN'S SITUATION.

SUCH **AS--**

THIS EVENT.

DR. **WALSH,** WOULD YOU **PLEASE?**

I... THIS **PARTY?** HOW IS A... BIRTHDAY PARTY OR WHATEVER SUPPOSED TO--

HEY! WE **DOING** THIS?

TODAY'S A GOOD ENOUGH DAY TO DIE AS ANY, YEAH?

HA HA!

JEBEDIAH! THIS IS SERIOUS! NOW PLEASE, LET'S--

HAPPY DEATHDAY, FRIEND.

AW, DOC, AND YOU BROUGHT ME A PRESENT AND EVERY-THING...

AN HONEST-TO-GOD NEW PERSON TO TALK TO!

NAME'S JEB, FRIEND. BEEN LOOKING FORWARD TO THIS!

I-- "DEATHDAY"?

PART OF MY DUTIES IS TO ENSURE THAT THE SYSTEM OUTSIDE OUR OWN DOESN'T NOTICE ANYTHING PECULIAR.

I'M IN CHARGE OF DETERMINING THE DAY YOU DIE, SO WE CAN PROPERLY FILE DEATH CERTIFICATES WHEN YOUR TIME WOULD NATURALLY BE UP.

I SCHEDULE OUR DEATHS, OUR REBIRTHS, PROCESS PAPERWORK WITH THE APPROPRIATE GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES. THESE "PARTIES" ARE NOT MY IDEA...

BUT "BIRTHDAYS" NO LONGER SEEM AS IMPORTANT, AND A "DEATHDAY" ONLY COMES AROUND ONCE EVERY "LIFETIME", SO PEOPLE HAVE TURNED THEM INTO A "THING"...

HEY! WAIT A SECOND!

"MASSIVE CORONARY"?! I **TOLD** YOU I WANTED MY CAUSE OF DEATH TO BE FROM **SAVING** SOMEONE FROM, LIKE, A **BIKER** GANG OR--

LOOK, THERE **WASN'T** ENOUGH SPACE TO, YOU KNOW, PROPERLY DETAIL YOUR IMAGINED **ADVENTURES!**

REST ASSURED, YOU HAD YOUR **MASSIVE CORONARY** WHILE FIGHTING OFF THE BIKE GANG, **OKAY?**

NOW GO, ENJOY YOUR DEATHDAY, HERO.

WOW, YOU GUYS HAVE THOUGHT OF EVERYTHING...

I MEAN, NOT **EVERYTHING.** ME BEING HERE SHOWS **THAT...**

THE **MISTAKE** OF **YOU** WAS BEFORE I WAS MADE **ADMINISTRATOR,** BEFORE WE HAD A **SYSTEM...**

IT WOULD **NEVER** HAPPEN **NOW,** BELIEVE ME. YOUR **MOTHER'S DECEIT** WOULD BE **UNCOVERED** AND **DEALT** WITH.

I NEVER **DID** CLOSE THE BOOKS ON YOU, **THOMAS.** NEVER MADE THE GOOD DOCTOR SIGN HIS NAME TO ANYTHING. I WAS **YOUNGER** THEN, NAIVE. I HAD **HOPE.**

BUT **NOW,** IF I FIND YOU **THREATEN** THIS TOWN IN THE **SLIGHTEST,** I WILL NOT HESITATE...

TO FILL OUT YOUR DEATH CERTIFICATE.

I've been beaten, shot, terrorized since I got to this godforsaken town...

But that woman is the First person to truly scare me.

The town's coming together in my head like puzzle pieces, little by little.

I can't escape. Not by blindly running. Not by Force.

I'll only escape by learning about the town. The people, the history.

They think I'll settle in, acclimate.

That the lure of living Forever will eventually be enough to make me want to stay.

But this is all they've known.

This is their home.

L.WATER POLICE

But it's never been mine.

And it never will be.

So now I'm just going to walk their walk.

Walk a straight line. Follow the rules.

Stay out of trouble.

They won't buy it, not at first.

But they will.

In time.

And like the Doc said, I've got all the time in the world.

FLIT

So today I gather. I get answers. From the one woman at the heart of all this craziness.

My mother.

They think I'll forget. That I'll move past everything.

But they killed my friend.

TONY KIM, CREATOR OF HIT APP SPELLGRAM, UNHEARD FROM FOR TWO WEEKS.

I won't forget.

AXSS NEWS

NEW YORK TECH FOUNDER STILL MISSING

WAHHHH! WAHH!

I KNOW, I **KNOW!** MOMMY'S ALMOST READY! WE'LL JUST GET YOU SOME **HOT DOGS** FOR THE **TRIP,** OKAY?

WAHHHHH!

TOMMY, PLEASE! JUST GIVE ME **ONE MINUTE!**

WAHH! WAH! WAHHHH!

WE'RE **LATE** ALREADY, I JUST--

WAHHH!!!

AHH! DAMMIT!

JUST WHAT I NEED.

GOING TO A JOB **INTERVIEW** WITH A **BLOODY FINGER.**

I KNOW, SWEETIE! MOMMY'LL BE THERE IN A SEC, SHE JUST NEEDS TO GET--

A...A BAND-AID...

1986

THANK YOU--THANK YOU FOR COMING OUT...

I KNOW THIS IS--WELL, AN ***UNUSUAL*** SITUATION, BUT WE NEED TO--

WELL, WE NEED TO COME TOGETHER AND ***SHARE*** INFORMATION AND DECIDE, ***AS A TOWN,*** WHAT TO DO...

RIGHT NOW-- RIGHT NOW ALL WE KNOW IS THAT... WELL, PEOPLE IN THE TOWN ARE... **HEALING** INCREDIBLY QUICKLY.

JAY TAYLOR, HE, WELL, HE LOST HIS **FOOT** THREE DAYS AGO IN A **COMBINE ACCIDENT** AND ...AND WOULDN'T YOU KNOW IT, THE...THE...

THE DAMNED THING GREW BACK, IT JUST... JUST...

ALL RIGHT, MISTER **MAYOR,** THANK YOU FOR THAT...

FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO **HAVEN'T** HAD THE PLEASURE OF BEING IN MY COURTROOM, I'M **SIMON TAYLOR,** THE TOWN'S **JUDGE.**

WHATEVER IS HAPPENING IN OUR TOWN DOES **NOT** APPEAR TO BE HAPPENING OUTSIDE OF IT. THIS IS AN EXTREMELY UNIQUE CIRCUMSTANCE, AND UNTIL WE GET MORE INFORMATION...

WE'LL BE INSTITUTING A... WELL, A **LAW,** A TEMPORARY ONE, RESTRICTING THE MOVEMENTS OF CITIZENS.

UNTIL WE FULLY UNDERSTAND THIS... PHENOMENON...THIS **MIRACLE...**AND HOW IT AFFECTS THE TOWN GOING FORWARD, WE REQUEST THAT PEOPLE **DO NOT LEAVE TOWN,** OR DISCUSS THESE EVENTS WITH ANYONE **OUTSIDE** OF **STILLWATER.**

WAIT ONE **SECOND** THERE, **"JUDGE"!**

I GOT **SHIPMENTS** TO SEND OUT! IS THE **TOWN** GOING TO **REIMBURSE** ME FOR **LOST REVENUE?!** THIS IS **CRAZY!** YOU CAN'T--

LOOK, I UNDERSTAND THIS WILL BE **DIFFICULT.** WE ALL HAVE FRIENDS, FAMILIES, AND DEALINGS, OUTSIDE OF TOWN. BUT **IMAGINE** WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO STILLWATER IF PEOPLE FOUND OUT. IF THE **GOVERNMENT** FOUND OUT. WE'D BE **GUINEA PIGS.**

PLEASE DON'T MAKE THIS HARDER THAN IT HAS TO BE. **SHERIFF MIKE** AND HIS **DEPUTIES** WILL BE ENFORCING THIS **STRICTLY.** IT'S FOR THE GOOD OF THE TOWN, FOR **US.**

AND BELIEVE ME WHEN I SAY--

I HOPE THIS WILL JUST BE **TEMPORARY.**

1990

STILLWATER PUBLIC SCHOOL

HAVE A GREAT SUMMER

THANKS AGAIN FOR LOOKING AFTER HIM, **DINE.** THE EXTRA SHIFT AT THE RESTAURANT WAS **MUCH** NEEDED.

NOT A PROBLEM, LAURA.

THOUGH, FRANKLY, YOU COULD HAVE JUST LEFT **TOMMY** ON HIS OWN AND HE'D BE FINE.

I--I SUPPOSE YOU'RE RIGHT. HE CAN'T DO ANY DAMAGE, BUT...

THE **THOUGHT** OF HIM EXPERIENCING ANY **PAIN,** EVEN IF IT **DID** HEAL...

OR WHAT IF THIS WHOLE THING WEARS **OFF...?**

WELL, IN ANY CASE, IT'S NOT A **PROBLEM...**

EVERY SEMESTER, WE HAVE FEWER AND FEWER KIDS AT THE SCHOOL. NOBODY SEEMS TO BE ABLE TO HAVE THEM, AND THE ONES FROM BEFORE ARE JUST GETTING SMARTER WITHOUT GETTING OLDER, SO...

I...I SUPPOSE THAT'S TRUE.

TOMMY IS... I MEAN, HE'S GETTING SMARTER EVERY DAY...

IN THE BODY OF A TWO-YEAR-OLD.

REVEREND DUNLOP KEEPS CALLING THIS A "MIRACLE"...

BUT TRAPPED IN THIS **TOWN,** IN BODIES THAT NEVER AGE...

"DOESN'T SEEM LIKE A MIRACLE TO **ME.**"

--YOUR **FIRST** OFFENSE. BUT **STILL.**

SENDING **MAIL** WITHOUT IT BEING PRE-APPROVED BY THE **OFFICE** IS ONE THING...

BUT A **BIRTHDAY CARD,** WITH AN **INVITATION** TO THE **TOWN?** IT'S A **SERIOUS** CRIME.

I JUST-- M-MY MOTHER... SHE'S GETTING **OLDER,** AND I-- I THOUGHT...

SIX MONTHS IN LOCK-UP.

YOU'RE **LUCKY** WE CAUGHT THE LETTER BEFORE IT LEFT OR IT WOULD'VE BEEN A LOT LONGER, BELIEVE ME.

BANG!

YOUR HONOR...

SHERIFF. I THINK WE MAY NEED TO RECONSIDER OUR **SCALE** OF **PUNISHMENT.** STEALING **TIME** FROM THE CONVICTED DOESN'T QUITE PACK THE SAME **PUNCH** IT ONCE DID...

UH, SURE. OF COURSE.

ACTUALLY, CAN I TALK IN YOUR **CHAMBERS** ABOUT SOMETHING?

WHAT'S ON YOUR *MIND*, MICHAEL?

WELL, A *LOT*, REALLY.

I THINK WE NEED TO...

REVISIT THE *ACHILLES LAWS.*

I SEE. HAS SOMETHING CHANGED THAT I'M NOT *AWARE* OF? DID SOMEONE GET *SICK*? ANYONE *DIE*?

BECAUSE THAT *DOCUMENT* HAS WORKED *QUITE WELL* IN KEEPING OUR TOWN SAFE BY PROTECTING OUR *ONE WEAKNESS...*

OUR BORDERS.

LOOK, SIMON--

--"*YOUR HONOR.*"

...*YOUR HONOR.*

I... UNDERSTAND, BETTER THAN *ANYONE* THAT THE LAWS HAVE *PROTECTED* US. I ENFORCE THEM EVERY *DAY.*

BUT THEY WERE SUPPOSED TO BE *TEMPORARY* UNTIL WE FIGURED OUT A BETTER WAY TO *LIVE* WITH THIS...SITUATION.

THERE ARE PEOPLE WITH **LOVED ONES** OUTSIDE THE TOWN WHO CAN'T VISIT THEM, OR KEEP HAVING TO **REBUFF** THEIR OFFERS TO **VISIT STILLWATER.**

BUT WORSE, WE HAVE--THERE ARE **KIDS** IN THE TOWN. THEY'RE GETTING OLDER, BUT THEIR BODIES **AREN'T.**

WE NEED TO AMEND THESE **LAWS** TO INCLUDE SUPERVISED TRAVEL OUTSIDE. IT'S JUST **HUMANE...**

SHERIFF...

IF **ANYTHING,** WE NEED TO AMEND OUR LAWS TO **BETTER** PROTECT US AS TECHNOLOGY **ADVANCES.** THE WORLD, I FEAR, IS GETTING **SMALLER.**

THE **RELATIVES** THING WILL NATURALLY END ONCE THEY'VE ALL PASSED AWAY, AND THE **CHILDREN** WILL SIMPLY GET ACCUSTOMED TO THEIR **YOUTHFUL BODIES.**

I...CAN YOU **HEAR** YOURSELF? THIS ISN'T--

I DON'T THINK THIS IS THE RIGHT WAY **FORWARD.** AND, FRANKLY? THE MAYOR AGREES WITH ME.

AH. THE **MAYOR.**

SOUNDS TO ME LIKE YOU'VE GOT IT ALL FIGURED **OUT.**

IN **THAT** CASE...

SOME **HOMEWORK.** PLEASE GIVE SOME THOUGHTS TO ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF **PUNISHMENT** AS WE UPDATE OUR LAWS. AS THAT CLEARLY FALLS **WITHIN** YOUR PURVIEW.

AND DO CLOSE THE DOOR ON YOUR WAY **OUT.**

SO.

WHAT...WHAT ARE THE **OPTIONS** HERE?

I DON'T KNOW.

WHEN ALL THIS **STARTED,** PEOPLE WERE PANICKED. THE **JUDGE** STEPPED UP AND GAVE EVERYONE **ORDER.**

AND AS A RESULT, THEY GAVE HIM POWER. HE CAN OVERRULE THE MAYOR AND ME. BUT NOT **BOTH** OF US.

SO...WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO CONVINCE THE **TOWN COUNCIL** TO AMEND THE **LAWS.**

MOMMY?

I'M NOT REALLY SLEEPY. IS IT OKAY IF I READ SOME MORE?

OF COURSE, SWEETIE.

OKAY.

GOODNIGHT, MOMMY. GOODNIGHT, MIKE.

G'NIGHT, CHAMP.

LOOK. IF, SOMEHOW, THE **JUDGE** MANAGES TO OVERRULE US, I'LL...

I'LL FIGURE OUT A WAY.

HE **CAN'T** GROW UP LIKE THIS. IT'S NOT **RIGHT.**

MIKE... I CAN'T THANK YOU ENOUGH.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO THANK ME.

I'LL CALL YOU TOMORROW, LET YOU KNOW IF ANYTHING CHANGES.

CLK

--THAT I SHOULD THANK MY UNLUCKY STARS--

THAT I'M ALIVE AND YOU'RE THE WAY YOU ARE--

BUT THAT'S WHAT I GET--

I'VE COME TO EXPECT IT FROM YOU--

SKRBAM!!!

KRKRAK!

-KOFF!-
-KOFF!-

HEY, MIKE.

GKK... F-FUCK... T-TED?...

HEARD YOU AND THE **MAYOR** HAVE SOME IDEAS FOR THE **TOWN**...

SCHK

-GRK!-

FIGURED I'D BE THE FIRST TO TELL YOU...

HE **STEPPED DOWN** TONIGHT.

DIDN'T FEEL HE WAS UP TO THE **TASK.**

BUT THE **JUDGE** DOESN'T WANT **YOU** TO STEP DOWN. SAYS THE TOWN NEEDS "SOME **CONTINUITY**". IT WOULD **LOOK BAD** LOSING THE MAYOR **AND** YOU.

I TRIED TO ARGUE, 'CAUSE I'D CLEARLY BE A BETTER **SHERIFF** THAN YOU. BUT **YOU KNOW** THE JUDGE...

ANYWAY, JUST WANTED TO GIVE YOU AN **UPDATE**...

ON THE WAY THINGS ARE GONNA **BE** FROM NOW ON.

JANET WALSH, M.D.
Family Practice
Internal Medicine

HONESTLY, LAURA...

I'M NOT SURE WHY YOU BROUGHT ***TOMMY IN.*** LOOK, I ***MISS*** BEING A PROPER ***DOCTOR,*** BUT THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH HIM, OBVIOUSLY.

I--I ***KNOW*** THERE'S NOTHING ***PHYSICALLY*** WRONG, BUT...

MOMMY'S WORRIED ABOUT ME.

I...SWEETIE, ***DR. WALSH*** AND I HAVE TO GO IN THE OTHER ROOM FOR A SECOND. YOU'LL BE OKAY HERE?

YES.

TOMMY HAS THE ***MIND*** OF A ***FIVE-YEAR-OLD*** IN THE BODY OF AN ***EIGHTEEN-MONTH-OLD.***

THERE-- THERE ***HAS*** TO BE SOMETHING WE CAN ***DO?*** SOME WAY OF HELPING HIM?

LAURA... I KNOW THIS IS ***DIFFICULT,*** BUT NONE OF US KNOW HOW ANY OF THIS WORKS. NOT REALLY.

BUT THERE ARE RULES WE'VE OBSERVED. AND AS LONG AS HE'S ***IN THE TOWN,*** HE WON'T AGE.

I JUST--I DON'T HAVE THE **RESOURCES** TO FIGURE ANY OF THIS OUT.

I'M SORRY, BUT YOU JUST HAVE TO MAKE **DO.** HELP **TOMMY** UNDERSTAND--

LAURA!

MIKE! WHAT--

THANK **GOD** YOU'RE **HERE**...I WENT TO YOUR **HOUSE** AND--

WHERE'S **TOMMY?**

IN THE **EXAMINING ROOM!** WHAT'S **WRONG?** YOU'RE **COVERED** IN **BLOOD!**

DOC, I-- YOU MAYBE DON'T WANT TO **HEAR** ANY OF THIS--

I **GET** IT. I'LL JUST-- I'LL GO LOOK AFTER **TOMMY** WHILE YOU TALK.

LAURA, THE--THE **JUDGE,** HE--

HE'S IN **CHARGE** NOW. AND **NO ONE'S** LEAVING, **EVER.**

WE NEED TO GET YOU AND TOMMY **OUT** OF HERE AND--

MIKE.

WE CAN'T.

BUT--

THE LENNOX FAMILY RAN. AND TED AND HIS GOONS TRACKED THEM DOWN AND...

THEY WON'T REST UNTIL THEY FIND US. YOU KNOW THAT, BUT IF...

IF THEY THOUGHT WE WERE DEAD...

LAURA...

THEY'D NEVER BUY YOU GUYS DYING. THERE'S NO WAY.

I-- BUT, WHAT IF...

WHAT IF IT WAS...JUST TOMMY...?

I DON'T...

A WOLF. GRABBED HIM, TOOK HIM RIGHT FROM MY BACKYARD.

I DIDN'T KEEP AN EYE ON HIM BECAUSE...BECAUSE WHAT COULD HAPPEN TO A BABY WHO COULD LIVE FOREVER?

IT'LL... IT'LL WORK. BECAUSE WHO IN TOWN WOULD BELIEVE...

THAT I'D SEND MY CHILD AWAY FOREVER...

I... THAT COULD **WORK.**

NO DOUBT THE SEARCH WILL EXTEND OUTSIDE OF TOWN. I COULD...COULD SMUGGLE HIM OUT THEN.

WE CAN'T DO THIS **ALONE,** THOUGH. WE'D HAVE TO ENLIST **CHARLES.**

HE'S THE ONLY PERSON IN TOWN ALLOWED TO HAVE **DEALINGS** WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD, EVERYONE'S PERSONAL **LAWYER,** KEEPING THINGS TIDY.

I **TRUST** HIM. AND IT'S THE ONLY WAY WE COULD SET **TOMMY** UP WITH SOMEONE OUT OF TOWN AND STILL KEEP TRACK OF HIM, SO YOU CAN EVENTUALLY **JOIN** HIM...

I THINK THE--THE TRICKY PART WILL BE... **YOU.**

YOU'LL NEED TO **SELL** THIS, LAURA. YOU'LL HAVE TO REALLY **ACT** THE PART OF THE **GRIEVING** MOTHER...

OH, MIKE...

THAT WON'T BE A PROBLEM...

"AND IT WASN'T.

"WATCHING YOU LEAVE WAS THE HARDEST THING I'D EVER DONE.

"MIKE SWORE HE'D FIND A WAY TO HAVE ME JOIN YOU, SO I HELD ONTO THAT.

"AFTER A SEARCH BY ALMOST EVERYONE IN TOWN, YOU WERE DECLARED ***DEAD***, DRAGGED OFF BY ***WOLVES*** BEYOND OUR BORDERS.

"AND ***MIKE*** WAS ***RIGHT***. ***CHARLES*** HELPED US.

"SECURING A ***HOME***, WORKING WITH OTHER ***LAWYERS*** TO KEEP TRACK OF YOU, TO EVENTUALLY DELIVER THE LETTER THAT BROUGHT YOU ***BACK***...

"CHARLES DISAPPEARED A FEW YEARS AGO. I DON'T ***THINK*** IT WAS BECAUSE OF THIS, BUT WHO KNOWS? AND THEN MIKE...

"A ***LOT*** OF PEOPLE HAVE DISAPPEARED FROM ***STILLWATER***..."

BUT ONLY ONE EVER RETURNED.

NOW

THAT'S...I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS IS HAPPENING...

I KNOW. BELIEVE ME, I KNOW.

BUT IT IS. YOU'RE HERE. MY SON.

MY MIRACLE.

SO... SO WHAT NOW?

LAURA... MOM...I KNOW THIS IS...I KNOW THIS IS BIG FOR YOU. I GET THAT...

BUT I DON'T REMEMBER **ANY** OF THIS.

I GREW UP IN NEW YORK WITH BORING, REGULAR **PARENTS.** I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW I WAS ADOPTED UNTIL A FEW YEARS AGO.

THIS ISN'T... THIS ISN'T MY **HOME.** I CAN'T **STAY** HERE.

I... I KNOW.

I THINK I'VE ALWAYS KNOWN THAT WOULD BE THE CASE.

"THIS PLACE IS A **PRISON.**

"I THINK PEOPLE ARE FINALLY REALIZING THAT."

YOU CAN'T **STAY** HERE. I **GET** THAT...

BUT WHAT IF I SAID, INSTEAD OF GOING OUT INTO THE **WORLD...**

WE BROUGHT THE WORLD TO *US.*

SON...

WELCOME TO THE *THE WELCOME PARTY.*

SOMETHING HAS TO **CHANGE.**

THE WORLD ISN'T STANDING STILL LIKE **WE** ARE. THE IDEA THAT WE CAN HIDE OUR TOWN AND ITS SECRETS FOREVER JUST DOESN'T WORK IN AN AGE OF INVASIVE TECHNOLOGY.

WE HAVE A **NEW RECRUIT.** WELL, **HOPEFULLY** A NEW RECRUIT WITH US TONIGHT.

DANIEL...

OUR GROUP, **THE WELCOME PARTY,** HAS ONE GOAL: TO **CONVINCE** THE TOWN THAT WE SHOULD REVEAL OURSELVES TO THE WORLD.

IT'S AN UPHILL BATTLE SINCE **THE JUDGE** HAS SET HIS ENTIRE **LIFE** TO A SET OF RULES **PREVENTING** THAT...

BUT WE FEEL WE HAVE ENOUGH PEOPLE ON OUR SIDE NOW TO BRING THIS TO A TOWN **VOTE.**

YOU WERE WHAT TIPPED US OVER, DANIEL...

YOUR **ARRIVAL,** IT... IT **SHOWED** US WHAT COULD HAPPEN IF WE ALLOWED **FREE TRAVEL** TO AND FROM **STILLWATER.**

I KNOW YOU...DON'T **REMEMBER** ME. MY NAME IS **DINE.** I'M...WAS...THE TOWN'S **SCHOOLTEACHER.**

IT'S **UNCONSCIONABLY CRUEL** TO NOT ALLOW OUR **CHILDREN** TO **GROW,** THE WAY **YOU** WERE ALLOWED TO.

IT'S **CRUEL** THAT WE'VE HAD TO EXIST HERE, CUT OFF FROM OUR FRIENDS AND RELATIVES ON THE OUTSIDE, DENYING THEM EVEN A **REASON** FOR IT.

NOBODY WANTS THE TOWN **PICKED APART** BY **SCIENTISTS,** BUT WE HAVE TO ACCEPT THAT **POSSIBILITY** AND SIMPLY **DEAL** WITH THE CONSEQUENCES.

BECAUSE RIGHT NOW, THIS **ISN'T** LIVING.

THERE'S A **MEETING** TOMORROW NIGHT AT THE **TOWN HALL.** WE'RE GOING TO MAKE OUR CASE FOR A PROPER **VOTE** AMONG **ALL** CITIZENS, NOT JUST **THE JUDGE** AND HIS **CRONIES.**

WE HOPE WE CAN COUNT ON YOU, SON.

IT'S A NICE IDEA.

FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT.

IT IS.

LOOK, I HAVEN'T BEEN IN **TOWN** THAT LONG, BUT...

THE JUDGE DOESN'T STRIKE ME AS THE KIND OF GUY WHO'S **BIG** ON **DEMOCRACY.**

WHAT MAKES YOU THINK HE'LL **ALLOW** THIS?

HE'LL **HAVE** TO IF THERE'RE ENOUGH OF US.

NONE OF US WANT TO CHANGE THE LIVES OF THE TOWNSPEOPLE **WITHOUT** THEIR CONSENT.

WE'RE A **COMMUNITY.** IT HAS TO BE A COMMUNITY DECISION.

WE'LL **RESPECT** THE OUTCOME OF A **VOTE.**

BUT IF **THE JUDGE** STANDS IN THE WAY OF **THAT,** WELL...

ALL BETS ARE OFF.

EXACTLY.

ALL RIGHT. I BETTER GO. **TED** AND HIS **GOONS** ARE PROBABLY DRIVING AROUND LOOKING TO **SHOOT** ME AGAIN.

I... OKAY...

IT'S **SILLY...** I JUST...PART OF ME WISHES YOU'D STAY **HERE.** IN YOUR...YOUR OLD ROOM ...

I... LAURA. IT'S... IT'S GONNA TAKE ME A WHILE TO GET **USED** TO ALL OF THIS. I DON'T HAVE ANY **REAL MEMORY** OF--

I KNOW...

I KNOW...

LAURA... **MOM...** SERIOUSLY, I GOTTA GO.

I KNOW, JUST...

CHAPTER FIVE

JUST A LITTLE LONGER.

DON'T FUCK ANYTHING UP WHILE I'M GONE, QUENTIN, OR I SWEAR TO GOD--

I'M GOOD AT MY JOB! BEEN DOING THIS A HELL OF A LOT LONGER THAN YOU...

POLICE

DEPUTY, IF THERE'S ONE THING I'VE LEARNED OVER THE YEARS...

IT'S THAT TIME DOESN'T NECESSARILY MAKE ONE BETTER AT THEIR JOB.

SHERIFF TANYA.

JUDGE.

YOU TAKING CARE OF THAT BUSINESS...?

YEAH, I BETTER DO IT RIGHT AWAY SINCE THE NEWS IS MAKING A DEAL OF IT.

FIGURES TED WOULD GO AND OFF A CAPTAIN OF INDUSTRY.

SPEAK OF THE DEVIL...

BUT AT LEAST HE'S **OUR** DEVIL.

I **SAID** SIX A.M.

FUCK **OFF,** TANYA!

HAD TROUBLE GETTIN' MY HANDS ON A PROPER **BAG!**

I **KNOW** YOU'RE A GODDAMN **STICKLER** FOR PRESENTATION AND ALL THAT...

SHUT UP. NOW LET'S SEE...

OH, FOR **FUCK'S SAKE, TED!**

YOU **BURNED HIM?!**

FUCK **YOU!** I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE GONNA BE TAKING HIM ON A GODDAMN **ROAD TRIP!**

WHAT'S DONE IS DONE.

IS IT GOING TO BE A **PROBLEM?**

JUST AN ADDITIONAL PAIN. I'LL HAVE TO BUY A CAR TO TORCH WHEN I GET TO WHERE I'M GOING.

TRUTH BE TOLD, IT MAY BE **EASIER** THAT WAY.

HOW SO?

CHNG

THE **BULLET HOLE** IN THE **SKULL** MAY END UP BEING LESS NOTICEABLE WHEN ALL THAT'S LEFT IS **DENTAL RECORDS** TO I.D.

ALL RIGHT. I'LL CHECK IN REGULARLY. BUT I FIGURE IT'LL BE THREE TO FOUR DAYS.

NEED TO MAKE SURE "CEO TONY" IS FOUND AS FAR AWAY FROM **STILLWATER** AS POSSIBLE.

THANK YOU FOR THIS, SHERIFF.

AND GODSPEED.

I TRUST YOU'RE KEEPING *TABS* ON THE *BOY?*

UNITY'S ON HIM NOW.

I HAD THE SHIFT *LAST NIGHT,* AND...

HE WAS WITH *THEM.*

I SEE. EXPECTED, I SUPPOSE.

WILL YOU BE *JOINING* TONIGHT, OR...

NO, SIR.

WITH DAMN NEAR EVERYONE AT THE MEETING, I FIGURE *THAT'S* WHEN ANYONE ITCHING TO LEAVE WOULD *TRY.*

BORDER PATROL IS GOING TO BE *TIGHT.*

EXCELLENT.

DON'T LET ME *DOWN,* SON.

DON'T WORRY, SIR...

I WON'T.

This is it.

If tonight goes well, I get to go back to my old life.

But if it doesn't...

NATHAN TOLD ME HE'D ALREADY BE *INSIDE*...

I'm trapped here forever.

NATHAN?

DR. WALSH.

AH.

OH! MRS. LILLOW! SORRY, I DIDN'T--

THOMAS.

IT'S "DANIEL" ACTUALLY. I DON'T EVEN *REMEMBER* BEING CALLED--

NO...

YOU ARE *THOMAS QUINN.*

I AM A ***MODERN WOMAN,*** YOUNG MAN. I ***RESPECT*** YOUR GENERATION'S DESIRE TO CHANGE ***NAMES*** OR REVEAL YOUR ***GENDER...***

BUT YOU ***MUST*** FILL OUT THE ***PROPER FORMS*** TO ***REFLECT*** IT!

OKAY! OKAY!

I'LL COME TO YOUR OFFICE FIRST THING IN THE MORNING!

WOW...SHE IS TERRIFYING.

I THINK THEY'RE STARTING...

ATTENTION! ALL RISE--

FOR THE COUNCIL!

THANK YOU, GUS.

WELL.

A LOT OF FACES OUT TONIGHT.

SEEMS TO ME THAT OUR NEW **RESIDENT** HAS SPARKED SOME **CIVIC PRIDE** IN FOLKS.

ALL RIGHT THEN, LET'S JUST JUMP IN, SHALL WE?

FIRST ON THE **DOCKET** IS A REQUEST FROM... DR. WALSH.

WHAT CAN WE DO FOR YOU, DOC? STILL HAVING PROBLEMS WITH THE **SIDEWALK MAINTENANCE** OF--

AFRAID IT'S BIGGER THAN THAT, JUDGE...

I KNOW WE'VE **BEEN HERE** BEFORE. DEBATING WHAT THE TOWN SHOULD **DO** WITH REGARDS TO ITS... INTERACTIONS WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD--

DOC. LET ME STOP YOU RIGHT THERE.

THERE **IS** NO "INTERACTION" WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD.

THAT'S **NON-NEGOTIABLE.** THE ONLY EXCURSIONS ARE LIKE WHAT SHERIFF TANYA IS DOING FOR US RIGHT NOW, **PROTECTING** STILLWATER.

I **KNOW** THAT'S BEEN THE CASE, BUT...

THINGS HAVE **CHANGED.** TECHNOLOGY, SURVEILLANCE, THE **RE-APPEARANCE** OF YOUNG **DANIEL.**

THERE'S BEEN AN **UPHEAVAL,** AND IT'S ONLY GOING TO GET **BIGGER.** WE CAN ALL **FEEL** IT.

THIS TOWN HAS LIVED WITH THE **PAIN** OF ISOLATION FOR TOO LONG, JUDGE. I KNOW YOU **MEAN** WELL, BUT...

WE NEED TO PUT THIS TO A *VOTE.*

I SEE.

AND HOW MANY PEOPLE HERE *AGREE* WITH THAT STATEMENT?

THIS WILL WORK.

UNGRATEFUL.

AFTER ALL I'VE **DONE** FOR YOU. KEEPING YOU **SAFE.**

WITHOUT ME AND THESE **LAWS...**

YOU **ALL** WOULD HAVE BEEN **PICKED APART** BY THE **GOVERNMENT.** **TORN** FROM YOUR **HOMES,** FROM YOUR **BIRTHRIGHT.**

NO MATTER **HOW MANY YEARS** PASS, YOU'RE ALL STILL **CHILDREN.**

THERE WILL **BE** NO **VOTE** TO DESTROY THIS TOWN.

BAM!

SHAME ON THOSE OF YOU WHO **WISH** THIS.

NO!

YOU HAVE NO **RIGHT!** YOU--

I HAVE DIVINE RIGHT!

GOD HAS GIVEN US THIS GIFT! AND HE HAS PUT ME IN CHARGE OF IT!

FUCK YOU!

I--

I--HOW DARE--

BAILIFF. CLEAR THE HALL.

YES, SIR, JUDGE.

NO!

AHH!!

DON'T--

BANG! BANG!

BANG! BANG!

HOLY SHIT! WE CAN'T--

BANG! BANG!

BANG! BANG!

ET!

NH!

GOD-DAMMIT, DEPUTY! DO YOUR JOB AND SHOOT THESE MUTINEERS!!

I-I-I--

BANG! BANG! BANG!

...Y-YES, SIR...

THAT...THAT F-FUCKING IDIOT...

COME ON, LET'S GET OUT OF HERE--

I TOLD YOU HE WOULDN'T LISTEN! HE'S INSANE!

I NEVER... NEVER THOUGHT IT WOULD COME TO THIS...

STAND DOWN!

HN!

BANG! BANG! BANG!

YOU FOOL...

"THIS ISN'T THE WAY..."

YOU'RE TRYING TO SAVE US...

"BUT YOU'RE JUST INVITING THE ONE THING THAT SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE..."

DEATH.

SKRAKOM!

DOC!

DOC!!

D-
DANIEL...?

HE'S STILL IN THERE! WE HAVE TO--

DANIEL!

YOU **CAN'T!** THE FIRE WON'T **KILL** YOU, BUT THE **PAIN** WILL KNOCK YOU--

HE **COULDN'T** HAVE SURVIVED THAT! HE JUST--

WE HAVE TO **WAIT** AND **SEE,** DANIEL...

JUST WAIT... WAIT...

"FOR THE FLAMES TO DIE DOWN."

MOVE AND YOU'RE DEAD BLONDIE.

KLK

SHIT, SON. REFLEXES AIN'T HELD UP...

NO NEED...

SINCE I CAN'T DIE.

AND NEITHER CAN YOU NOW.

SEMPER FI, MOTHER-FUCKERS.

1993

U S POST OFFICE
STILLWATER

MORNIN', JOAN.

ANYTHING OF **NOTE** THIS MORNING?

HEY, TED. YEAH, ANOTHER LETTER TO **MITCH DERRY** FROM HIS **BROTHER.** HE'S NOT BUYING MITCH'S RESPONSES ABOUT NOT WANTING TO SEE HIM.

SAYS HE'S GONNA COME **HERE** IF MITCH DOESN'T VISIT HIM.

HM.

I'LL ASK THE **JUDGE,** SEE HOW HE WANTS TO HANDLE IT.

ANYTHING ELSE?

YEAH. SOMETHING FOR **YOU,** IF YOU CAN BELIEVE IT.

SHPIP

DIDN'T BOTHER OPENING IT.

SO **RARE** THAT YOU GET **MAIL.** BESIDES YOUR **VETERANS BENEFITS** CHECKS THAT IS--

--REALLY THINK IT WARRANTS THIS?

SIR?

I SAID, DO YOU THINK IT WARRANTS THIS?

MITCH'S BROTHER?

I... YES, I DO, SIR.

YOU'VE SENT ME OUT FOR LESS. HIS LETTERS HAVE GOTTEN MORE ERRATIC. HE'S EITHER COMING HERE SOON OR GOING TO THE COPS.

AND I DON'T THINK WE WANT EITHER OF THOSE TO HAPPEN.

HNH.

YOU'RE PROBABLY RIGHT.

I HATE TO SEND YOU OUT AGAIN SO SOON AFTER LAST TIME. THIS IS A TERRIBLE BURDEN YOU CARRY, TED. THE TOWN WON'T FORGET IT.

JUDGE TAYLOR...

IT'S MY DUTY.

CHAPTER SIX

READY!

AIM!

FIRE!

BANG!!

READY!

AIM!

...TED?

HOLY SHIT! TED! YOU FUCKIN' MADE IT!

T-TREY?

TED! WHAT THE FUCK, MAN?!

HOLY SHIT, WE THOUGHT YOU WERE AS DEAD AS BOYLAN!

I'M SORRY--SORRY I MISSED THE SERVICE...

YOU'RE HERE NOW...

AND THAT'S WHAT **MATTERS.**

DIDN'T KNOW IF YOUR **ADDRESS** WAS STILL **CURRENT.**

SARGE. IT IS, SIR.

GOD **DAMN,** BOY...

I'D SWEAR YOU AIN'T AGED A **DAY** IN THE LAST--WHAT'S IT **BEEN** SINCE **GRENADA?** FIFTEEN YEARS?

YES, SIR. JUST...

HEALTHY **LIVING,** I GUESS.

WE WERE **WORRIED** ABOUT YOU, MAN...

YOUR **PHONE NUMBER** DIDN'T WORK, YOU HAVEN'T COME TO ANY OF THE **GET-TOGETHERS...**

WHAT'VE YOU BEEN **UP** TO?

JUST... YOU KNOW... SORTING MY **SHIT** OUT. ODD JOBS...

ON THE **ROAD** A LOT.

BEST **SHOT** IN THE **SQUAD** IS A **TRAVELLING SALESMAN!**

YEAH, I GUESS **SO...**

TINK

SADLY MEANS I CAN'T **STAY** LONG...

"WORK CALLS."

TNK

FUCKIN' **RACOONS,** I SWEAR TO--

-HK!-

HRRR!!

GK--
N--

KRNCH!

WH-
WH...

HH...

...IT AIN'T WHAT IT *LOOKS* LIKE--

SURE IT IS, SON...

SEEN IT BEFORE. RARE, BUT I SEEN IT.

MARINE LOSES CONTACT WITH HIS ***SQUAD.*** OVERLY PRIVATE. "TRAVELS FOR WORK."

IT'S IN YOUR ***EYES,*** BOY.

CONTRACT KILLER. GOOD MONEY. DOESN'T END WELL.

THAT'S NOT--YOU DON'T--

GOTTA REPORT IT, SON. BUT AFTER ***GRENADA,*** WHAT YOU ***DID*** FOR US...

I'LL GIVE YOU A GOOD HEAD START. YOU CAN FIGURE OUT A NEW ***IDENTITY,*** NEW ***LIFE--***

NO!

IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT ***ME, SARGE.***

YOU-- YOU AIN'T ***LEAVIN' HERE.***

OH, AIN'T I?

AND WHO'S GONNA STOP ME, MARINE?

YOU?

I DON'T WANT TO...

BUT YEAH.

HA! I TAUGHT YOU, BOY!

I KNOW YOU!

HNH!

I KNOW ALL YOUR MOVES! ALL YOUR--

-NF!-

KRSH!

NGH!

YOU!

NH!

DON'T!

KNOW!

ME!

HUFF
HUFF
HEFF
GODDAMMIT, KREEGS...
YOU'VE GOT ONE CHANCE HERE...
I'LL LET YOU GO. I KNOW YOU'RE A MAN OF YOUR WORD, AND YOU KNOW I AM, TOO.
GRG
YOU SAW NOTHING TONIGHT. YOU HEAR ME? YOU BREATHE A WORD OF THIS...
AND I'LL KILL LINDA.
I'LL KILL SANDY.
YOUR WIFE, YOUR SON. DEAD AT MY HANDS.
DO YOU HEAR ME?
SAY SOMETHING, DAMMIT.
GRK... Y...YES...
WON'T SAY...GRKL ...ANY... THING...
GOOD. SEMPER FI, SARGE...

"SEMPER FI."

2017

WHAT **WAS THAT** CALL ABOUT?

MARGE SAID SHE SPOTTED A **VEHICLE** COMING DOWN **BLACK CREEK ROAD.**

WANT ME TO--?

NAH. NO OFFENSE, QUENTIN, BUT OUT-OF-TOWNERS USUALLY NEED ***INTIMIDATION.***

TED. WANNA TAKE THIS?

HNPH.

SURE THING, "SHERIFF TANYA".

FUCKIN' **GOD FORBID** OUR ACTUAL **SHERIFF** DID ANYTHING AROUND HERE.

I AM DOING SOMETHING. I'M TAKING THE LUMP OF SHIT THE **JUDGE** SADDLED ME WITH...

"AND USING HIM FOR THE ONLY THING HE'S FUCKING **GOOD** AT."

SKREE

ROAD'S **OUT.**

POLICE

GONNA HAVE TO TURN BACK.

MIND ROLLIN' DOWN THE WINDOW SO I CAN--

NH!

TMP!

HNF! MOTHER-**FUCKER,** YOU--

RAH!!

KRNCH

HOLY **SHIT...**

STILL AIN'T AGED A DAY.

-NH!- F-FUCK YOU, K-KREEGS... I KNOW PEOPLE... ANYTHING HAPPENS TO ME... L-LINDA--

YEAH, I KNOW.

I BELIEVE YOU, TED.

BUT HERE'S THE THING...

GOD BEAT YOU TO IT. CANCER TOOK HER SIX MONTHS AGO.

AND SANDY NEVER CAME BACK FROM AFGHANISTAN.

NOTHIN' LEFT TO LOSE, PRIVATE.

GOODBYE, SON.

KLK

WAIT! WAIT--

DON'T! LET ME--LET ME TELL YOU SOMETHING....

SOMETHING THAT'LL CHANGE EVERYTHING.

NOW

SO WHEN'RE WE GONNA SEE SOME **ACTION** HERE, PRIVATE?

THE **BIG MEETING** WAS TONIGHT.

I'M GONNA GO INTO **TOWN** AND SEE WHAT THE FALLOUT IS.

AIN'T NO WAY THE **JUDGE** WILL LET THERE BE A VOTE. TENSIONS ARE GONNA BE **HIGH.**

ONCE IT FEELS LIKE WE CAN STEP IN AND **TAKE OVER,** WE WILL.

CAUTION'S A GOOD PART OF ANY PLAN...

BUT THE **SQUAD** IS GETTING **RESTLESS.** TOOK A LOT OF WORK, A LOT OF **LOOSE ENDS** TIED UP TO GET US ALL HERE...

I'M JUST SAYING, I WON'T **LET** THEM STAY COOPED UP FOR MUCH **LONGER.**

CLKVROOM

YOU'LL GET YOUR **CHANCE.**

DON'T WORRY.

I AIN'T WORRIED...

"NOT BY A LONG SHOT."

HOLY SHIT.

HOLY. SHIT.

CLARE! WHAT THE FUCK HAPPENED?!

CLARE!

OH G-GOD, TED...IT WAS HORRIBLE!

TH-THE JUDGE OVERTURNED THE VOTE! PEOPLE GOT MAD...

THERE WAS GUNFIRE AND THEN...AN E-EXPLOSION...

H-HORRIBLE...

GOD-DAMMIT...

LILLOW!

MRS. LILLOW, THEODORE... DON'T MAKE ME--

WHERE THE FUCK IS THE JUDGE?!

OVER HERE!

HE'S--

NHH... TED...

WHAT HAPPENED?

DON'T... DON'T KNOW...

HAPPENED... FAST...

WE'RE LOSING CONTROL, BOY...

WHOEVER DID THIS... THEY...

"WHOEVER"--

IT WAS FUCKIN' THEM! THE WELCOME PARTY!

YOU PUT YOUR FOOT DOWN AND THEY FUCKIN' BLEW IT OFF!

I TOLD YOU, JUDGE!

WE NEED TO FUCKING CRUSH THEM! WE--

WHO...

FUCK.

JUDGE... THINGS ARE MOVIN' FAST...

I HAVE SOME PEOPLE I'D LIKE YOU TO MEET.

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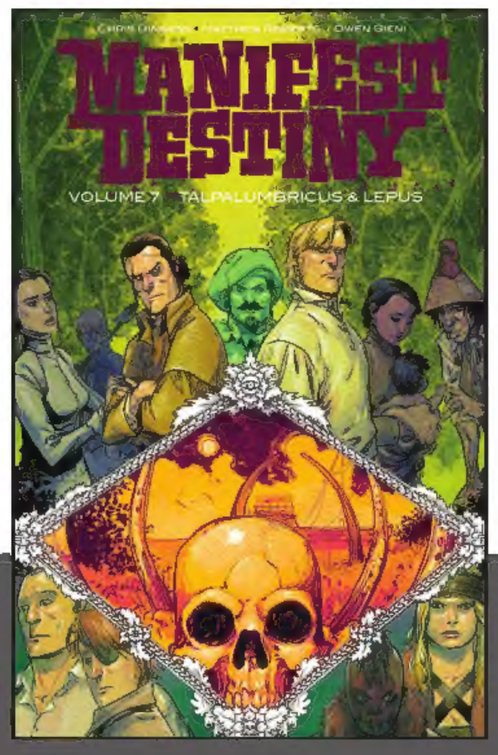

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Stillwater

Nobody dies.

In the town of Stillwater, that's not just a promise.

It's a threat.

Seemingly frozen in time and unable to age, its citizens have learned to exist with the knowledge that they'll live forever. With no one allowed in or out of the town under the threat of severe violence, things seem normal from the outside. But when Daniel shows up in town after receiving a mysterious letter, he'll find out if immortality is a gift or a curse...

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